An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>The Orchard Playschool</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>19 The Orchard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killester</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DY0043</td>
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Date of Inspection: 08-04-2019
WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school setting participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. These inspections affirm good practice and advise actions, where appropriate, to aid the further development of education provision in the setting.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of the context to support children’s learning and development
2. Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development
3. Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements
4. Quality of management and leadership for learning

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate’s quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the setting’s provision in each area.
Early Years Education Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>08-04-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>interaction with children</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Review of relevant documents</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Feedback to setting owner</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Meeting with setting owner</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</strong></td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

The Orchard Playschool is a private setting which is based in Killester, Dublin 5. It provides a morning session and an afternoon session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, twenty-one children and two practitioners, one of whom is the owner, were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will be found in the appendix of this report.

**AREA 1**

**QUALITY OF CONTEXT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- The quality of the context to support the children’s learning and development is very good.
- There is a very caring and affirming atmosphere in the setting. The practitioners take time to engage in friendly conversations with parents and children on arrival and at home time.
- The interactions between the practitioners and the children are respectful and reciprocal. The practitioners’ consistently positive and responsive approaches contribute to the very authentic relationships that exist amongst the practitioners and the children. This highly commendable practice helps to promote the positive friendships that are evident among the children themselves.
- The sessions are effectively organised and structured to encourage children’s active participation in meaningful learning experiences. The visual schedule on display at children’s eye level reflects the well-established daily routine and supports children’s awareness of the scheduling of activities.
- The practitioners use some very good audio prompts to inform children of upcoming changes in activities. These practices help children to prepare for the transitions during the daily routine.
- The practitioners’ regular use of affirmative language and their guidance and meaningful praise of children for their efforts in activities are commendable.
- Snack time is used to encourage the children’s social skills, their interactions with their peers and their sense of responsibility. The children participate enthusiastically in tasks, such as distributing their individual place mats and their lunches. The practitioners and children sit and eat together and they engage in friendly conversations.
- The practitioners use a number of strategies to help foster children’s sense of identity and belonging. These include the use of imagery and photographs and visits by parents and members of the community to share their skills and to help raise children’s awareness of the roles of members in the community. There is potential to build on the range of activities used to deepen the children’s growing sense of identity and belonging and their awareness of others in the community.

*Action advised*

- The practitioners are advised to source and display additional pictures of members of the local community and places of interest in the locality. These can be used as props during activities and discussions to strengthen the children’s understanding of others in the community.
AREA 2
QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support the children’s learning and development is very good.
- Provision for the children’s learning is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The practitioners take cognisance of the children’s interests and the importance of progression in their learning when planning activities. Currently, the practitioners have yet to make these plans visible in the short-term planning documentation.
- The practitioners use individual learning books to record the children’s learning experiences. These include photographs of the children engaged in activities and a selection of their mark-making and arts and crafts achievements. The practitioners recognise that they are in the early stages of embedding a systematic approach to planning for and documenting the children’s learning experiences.
- The practitioners use highly effective interaction strategies to broaden and deepen the children’s understanding and learning. Examples of their noteworthy practice include the practitioners’ use of open-ended questions, their modelling of language and the promotion of children’s evolving thought process. In addition, regular opportunities are provided for the children to recall prior learning experiences and to connect these experiences with their new learning.
- The practitioners view children as active agents in organising their learning. Throughout the sessions, the practitioners supported the children in their choices of activity and sensitively added props to extend their thought processes.
- The indoor learning environment is spacious and inviting. The well-defined interest areas include a very good variety of appropriate materials that facilitate children to explore and experiment. The children regularly access the outdoor learning environment and a broad range of activities, including sensorial play, socio-dramatic, imaginative, and mark-making experiences.
- The practitioners promote the children’s emergent mathematical understanding. On the day of the inspection, they modelled mathematical language as they counted the children. The everyday resources, including a real cash register and calculators in the socio-dramatic area, are easily accessible and help to promote children’s developing understanding.
- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. During the inspection, the practitioners skilfully and sensitively encouraged children’s participation in activities. Books in different languages are available to help children experience stories about their own and other cultures.

Action advised
- The practitioners are advised to further develop planning and assessment approaches to ensure that they guide and reflect their practice. The consistent use of the templates and examples from the ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will provide guidance in this regard.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children demonstrate very high levels of enjoyment, fun and interest in their learning. During the inspection, there was lots of laughter and smiles from children who were clearly motivated in their learning activities. This was particularly evident during circle time and the activity about milking a cow.
- The children are clearly developing positive learning dispositions; they co-operate with their peers and demonstrate their sense of enquiry during activities, such as the seed sowing experience. The children display problem-solving skills and resilience. For example, a child remained on task after being told that his pretend sun-glasses had broken.
- Throughout the session, children experienced very high levels of success and achievement. A number of the children displayed the ability to share their achievements with others. For example, a child showed a practitioner the card he had made for his mother and another child declared that he was an expert at the computer matching game. Formal opportunities for children to share their learning have yet to be embedded as a regular feature of the daily programme.
The children are developing very good social skills; they independently and respectfully problem solve negotiations with each other during social interactions.

The children have ample opportunities to participate in activities where they can be freely creative and express their imagination. During the inspection, these included mark-making activities and the creation of the tractor linked to the theme of the week ‘Farming’.

The children display a positive sense of their own abilities, including their self-help skills; they master everyday tasks, such as manipulating materials, putting on their coats and looking after their self-care needs.

The children have opportunities to develop an awareness of the natural world. A range of appropriate learning activities is recorded in their learning journals. On the day of the inspection, the children enthusiastically participated in an appropriate learning activity about milking a cow.

Action advised
- The practitioners are advised to provide further opportunities for children to share and reflect on their learning and achievements. This could be facilitated through the provision of small-group activities and discussions for children to review their learning journals with others.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- There is a very strong ethos of positivity and collaboration among the practitioners. They demonstrate commitment to the provision of a high quality service for the children and their families attending the setting.
- The practitioners hold weekly informal planning and review meetings. At a formal meeting each term, the practitioners review their practices and identify areas in need of improvement to enhance children’s learning. The Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide has yet to be used as part of these self-review practices.
- It is evident that significant importance is placed on continuing professional development. Recently, the practitioners attended Children First and First Aid training. At the time of the inspection, the owner was participating in training in the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme.
- The practitioners exchange information on the children’s learning with parents on a daily basis and through the information displayed on the parents’ notice board. The children’s folders and learning journals go home at the end of the pre-school year.
- There are very good strategies in place to support children’s transition into the setting. Children commence on a phased-in basis. A peer buddy system is in place to support children’s transitions into the setting. This involves the practitioners pairing a new child with a more experienced child to help the new child to become familiar with the routine and the learning environment.
- Photographs of the local primary school and imagery of primary schools children will be attending is sourced and displayed to promote discussions to support children’s transitions to school. The owner plans to use the Mo Scéal transition documentation from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide in collaboration with parents so that they may share information on their child’s learning and progress with primary schools.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to further develop their formal self-review and reflection practices. At regular staff meetings, they could refer to the self-evaluation tools in the guide to create and implement a shared action plan to address agreed areas for improvement.
- The practitioners are advised to share the children’s learning and progress with parents on a more regular basis. This will also increase parents’ awareness of, and involvement in, their child’s learning.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
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<td>Very Good</td>
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### Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very good</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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Published September 2019
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

- Myself and my staff member welcomed the positive outcome of the inspection report. The inspection report was very informative and the inspection process was explained in great detail by the inspector on the day of the inspection.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- Area 1: We have taken steps to deepen the children’s sense of identity and belonging and awareness of the local community; By displaying pictures of the local library and library cards, local chemist, primary school and we are arranging visits from the guards, local pharmacy technician, and local primary school teachers.

- Area 2: We have begun to have weekly staff meetings to reflect planning and assessment approaches. We are now using the templates and examples from the Planning and Assessment Pillar of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide.

- Area 3: We have begun to provide further opportunities for children to share and reflect on their learning with Small Group time activities and with children reviewing their learning with others at Small Group time.

- Area 4: We are using the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide to further develop self-review and reflection practices and are also in the process of accessing Aistear, Siolta workshop. We have started to promote sending learning journals home with the children and parents are encouraged to comment on them.